

From: Roger Zimmerman
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/26/02 2:56pm
Subject: The Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern:

I am a computer professional who has used the products of many parties surrounding the Microsoft lawsuit (Sun, Netscape, IBM, and, of course Microsoft, among others) throughout my 20 year career. I believe the best conclusion to this matter would be for the federal and state governments to stop interfering in what is a perhaps America's greatest success story - our computer industry. At the very least, the U.S. government should honor the settlement it has offered thus far, and should compel all of the states to do the same. Microsoft should be allowed to get on with its business of making good products which serve a dire need in the marketplace.

I speak from a great deal of experience. I use computers in all aspects of my life, from my profession as a scientific programmer, in email communications with my friends and colleagues, and with my three daughters, whom I guide through the use of the internet and in a vast array of educational software. My wife has her own business for which the our home computer is her primary means of communication and research. In all of these pursuits, I have been exposed to a small slice of perhaps the richest and most empowering array of technologies the world has ever seen, or at least that have been made available to the masses.

Many of these products are from Microsoft. By and large, I have found their software to be accessible, understandable, and stable. They get the job done, and their consistency of interfaces, relative ease of use, and inter-operability are a great boon to the novice computer users among my family and friends.

But, many of the products my family and I use are not from Microsoft. Indeed, at eScription, I work in a small group of engineers which employs a network of 25 Linux-based (purchased from Red Hat) computers to do enormous amounts of computation and database management. We also communicate with our customers and administrative colleagues on networks of primarily Microsoft-driven machines. These machines interact seamlessly thanks to software and hardware from countless American and international companies. From a consumer's perspective it is impossible to reconcile this panoply of offerings with any characterization of "monopoly". There is virtually no barrier to obtaining software products from absolutely anyone who produces them. It insults my intelligence to have the government name me as a "victim" of this situation.

The more important point, however, is not the impact of the case against Microsoft on consumers. It is its impact on producers. What kind of a country do we want to live in? Do we want success to be punished or rewarded? Do we want property rights to be protected or infringed? Do we want our corporations to run to the government if they see a better competitor achieving success by providing what consumers want?

I submit that the answer to these questions is: we want freedom. The freedom to innovate, to succeed (and sometimes even fail), and yes, the freedom to make our own decisions about what we want to buy. The government can best do its job by protecting these freedoms.

Let Microsoft be Microsoft!

Sincerely,

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